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ABSTRACT

Several topics confronting college counseling and student affairs personnel in the 1980s are presented, including: (1) recent collegiate trends focusing on students, institutions, and their student services; (2) counseling centers' place in higher education; (3) different models of college counseling centers; (4) trends in college counseling services; and (5) challenges for college counselors. Among the trends discussed are the increasing numbers of "returning," minority group, disadvantaged, international, and disabled students. Implications for curricula and institutional policies are noted. It is observed that more specialized services for the heterogeneous student body have been created and that older, established services may have been modified or even abolished. The role of counseling centers within institutions is shown to be a function of administrative stability and authority, the relationship with the student personnel administrator, and the center's own goals. Models of counseling centers described include those with educational-educational, emotional-social, or educational skills caseloads. Trends in counseling service activities indicate more severe presenting problems, more services for returning students, more vocational/career counseling, etc. Challenges are summarized in terms of concern for consumers, the problem of becoming habituated, the problem of vocational counseling, and implications for counseling of student development concepts. Recommendations are provided for senior interviews (pre-graduation) and for learning about students' hierarchy of help-givers. (LB)

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STUDENT LIFE AND THE TASK OF COUNSELING IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE 1980's*

Thomas M. Magoon

Research Report # 17-80

* Presented to the Counseling Seminar, Japan Association of Student Counseling, Tokyo, Japan, November 4, 1980.

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Summary

This presentation was made to the 1980 Annual Conference of the Japan Association of Student Counseling. It was one of two invited addresses by an American associated with counseling psychology, college counseling and student personnel administration. The paper addresses a number of topics confronting counseling and student affairs personnel in colleges and universities in the 1980's. These topics include: (a) recent collegiate trends focusing on students, institutions and their student services; (b) counseling centers' place in higher education; (c) different models of college counseling centers; (d) trends in college counseling services; (e) challenges for college counselors; and (f) several recommended research and service activities.

* Presented to the Counseling Seminar, Japan Association of Student Counseling, Tokyo, Japan, November 4, 1980.

Student Life and the Task of Counseling in Colleges and Universities in the 1980's*

Thomas M. Magoon

University of Maryland

The opportunity to address you today is one I appreciate very much. It is indeed an honor. I hope I will be able to share with you some observations that will have use to you. That usefulness can take many forms - a new idea, an alternative way of viewing a problem, a different appraisal of some of counseling's accomplishments and problems. How to do this has been a bit of a puzzle to me. With our cultural differences, how would I be sure that my observations would be relevant to your interests and sensitive to current concerns in Japan? I concluded that I could not be sure at all. What I could do is discuss what I view as the most prominent issues and trends in college counseling and college student life. This presentation may be directly relevant to some of you and indirectly suggest other topics or ideas to others. Finally, I would be glad to answer questions at the end of this presentation for those of you whose concerns or interests I have not sufficiently addressed.

It may help you better understand my observations to know that I am a product of the University of Minnesota graduate school in counseling psychology. That school gave me a great appreciation for data and for empirical study of issues and problems. For many years now I have been a counseling psychologist generalist. Half time I direct the University of Maryland Counseling Center and half time I serve as professor in the counseling and counseling psychology graduate programs there. I am most interested in college

*Presented to the Counseling Seminar, Japan Association of Student Counseling, Tokyo, Japan, November 6, 1980.

and university counseling work in all shapes and forms. I have also offered professional service in different capacities with the American Psychological Association, and its Division of Counseling Psychology and the American Personnel and Guidance Association and its division - the American College Personnel Association and the College and University Counseling Center Directors Association. That professional service work has included journal editorial boards, and committee work on membership, accountability, certification/ licensure, ethics, agency accreditation and legislative work of these organizations.

I have studied and worked at very large and very small colleges and universities - both private and public. And for the last 15 years I have had the opportunity to conduct an annual census-type survey of American and Canadian counseling centers in colleges and universities and to develop a data bank of information based on these annual surveys (Magoon, 1980). This work has given me a great appreciation for the differences among institutions and among college counseling centers. I have learned that generalizations across counseling centers is very risky. Now let me tell you a bit about my university - the University of Maryland and our Counseling Center. First, the University. The University includes a group of separate campuses administered by a President who in turn is responsible to a Board of Regents. The University is the public university for the state of Maryland. The largest single campus is where I work - a large undergraduate and graduate campus totaling about 35,000 students including 8,000 graduate students and 27,000 undergraduates. Of these 27,000 only 8,000 live in campus dormitories so the great majority are commuters. Our campus is administered by a Chancellor and several Vice Chancellors - one of whom is responsible for Student Affairs. This Division of Student Affairs is staffed by a great variety of counselors, psychologists,

physicians, college student personnel workers and other specialists. This Division of Student Affairs is made up of the following units: Counseling Center, Health Service, Judicary Office, Campus Activities and Organizations, Orientation Programs, Commuter Affairs, Residence Life (Dormitory System), the Student Union and Intramural Activities.

As to the Counseling Center, we have about 40 professional staff members. We work within five divisions at the Center: the Counseling Service, the Reading and Study Skills Laboratory, the Disabled Student Service, the Parent Consultation and Child Evaluation Service and the Testing, Research and Data Processing Unit. Annually, we counsel over 5000 individuals, administer about 15,000 psychological tests, spend 150-200 hours weekly in consulting with individuals and organizations, and systematically follow-up over 500 individuals who have used our services. We serve as advisors and research supervisors to 50 graduate students in the counseling or counseling psychology programs. We publish more research and other manuscripts than any other university counseling center in the United States. We have an active Student Advisory Board which annually works in teams on a variety of projects for the Counseling Center. We have interests in teaching and training as well. About half of the staff annually teach one or two courses usually in Education or in Psychology. The Counseling Center serves as a primary on-campus training facility for graduate students in those departments. Each semester we provide counseling practicum courses and other individualized supervised counseling experience to about 40 different graduate students. And finally, we provide an internship training program for five full-time pre-doctoral students each year.

Over the years I have been guided by five particular objectives:

a. To recruit and employ very talented individuals in all positions and encourage them to be creative members of the Center.

b. To innovate and to foster change in methods, programs, conceptions and practices whenever possible.

c. To develop many and diverse relationships with other parts of the University so that the Counseling Center has multiple roots throughout the University.

d. To encourage data gathering as the soundest way to understand the Center's program and problems, understand the campus and its students, and contribute an empirical basis for decision making.

e. To broadly define the meaning of "counseling". A narrow view is that counseling means individual interview sessions. A broad view is that the counselor is an applied behavioral scientist whose subject matter (or laboratory) is the campus community, and whose goal is to improve the quality of life for the individuals and groups who compose the campus community.

Now, as a preview I shall discuss several issues:

Recent trends in college student life - trends that focus on students, institutions and their student services

Counseling centers' place in colleges and universities

Models of counseling centers

Trends in college counseling services

Counselor/student ratios

Challenges for college counselors

Recommendations

Recent Trends in College Student Life

The task for college and university counselors and counseling centers is to change as the students and institutions themselves change.

Students. In the United States much has been made of changes in the student bodies of institutions. The "New student" is a phrase used to describe some of these changes (Cross, 1971). The most noticeable include:

a. The increasing number of "returning students". This trend which started largely with women has broadened to include men as well. At most institutions "returning student" means students who are 25 years of age or older and have not been in school for some time. The rate at which the number of older students entering higher education is increasing at a rate is triple the rate of the usual college-age students. More than one-third of all college students now are over 25 years of age (Henderson 1977). The trend for women students is also notable. In the last 10 years the number of women in college who are over 30 has doubled (Smallwood, 1980). Many institutions are expecting (and hoping) these trends to compensate for anticipated declines in traditional college age students.

b. The increasing number of students from different minority groups. Higher education has become increasingly sensitive to the condition of minorities, the effects of racial and sex discrimination and now is on a course where federal government monitoring and enforcement of institutions' plans to reduce discrimination is common. There has been an increase in the percentage of black students enrolled, and institutions have been active in attempting to recruit such students.

c. Disadvantaged students. The opportunity for students from poor economic and educational backgrounds to acquire a college education, again with federal government support.

d. The universities have also attracted and/or sought out members of other minority groups - Asians, Chicanos, American Indians.

e. The international student population has been a substantial one for many years in American higher education, and continues to be so.

f. The most recent example of such an increasing group are the disabled students. Recent federal legislation has further emphasized right of access to higher education for individuals who are deaf, or are blind, or are confined to wheelchairs, and the like.

g. Finally, in addition to the above groups there have been changes in the group of students constituting the big majority of every campus. The number of these students has increased dramatically in the last 20 years particularly at the public institutions.

Over the last 10 years the students in general have changed. In the late 60's and early 70's there were many student demonstrations and protests. This period was called the student activism era. Now the climate of the college campus has changed. Now there is relatively little activism at all. This is not to say that students are apathetic, but they are less vocal or arousable for campus "causes". Students are more goal oriented and as they consider the not too favorable state of our economy and the lessened number of jobs for college gradautes, they are inclined to be more grade conscious, more goal directed frequently toward organizing their college career so that their college activities will clearly play a relevant part in securing a job upon graduation.

The trend may well be most associated with the following elements:

a. Broadening of the public school curricula starting many years ago - broadening in the direction of adding more life/citizenship-relevant course offerings, the net effect of which is that a high school graduate's reservoir of knowledge is composed of less of the traditional subject matter knowledge than had been true previously.

b. The more open and less structured climate of public education whereby students found it progressively easier to skip classes, study less and perhaps value traditional learnings less than did their predecessors.

c. The greater heterogeneity of new students entering college, emphasizing an increase in the proportion of those entering with less traditional backgrounds and less course work quality.

d. And perhaps underlying the above three trends is that of changes in our society. Increasingly families have both husband and wife working, there are fewer children, many divorces and separations, much television watching, rising delinquency and crime rates, and more. The effect of societal changes impinge upon all facets and there is no bigger one than education. Higher education's climate, particularly its student characteristics, are not created at college matriculation time. These can be foreseen by even casual study of the high school students approaching college age.

Institutions and their student services. The institutions and their services for students have made changes that reflect changes in students:

a. More specialized services have been created: disabled student services; offices for minority students; educational skills centers; remedial course programs; returning students programs; womens' centers; experiential learning programs and cultural study centers.

b. Each of these trends brings with it further spinoff problems and attempted solutions. For example, the presence of students in wheelchairs raises the need to make campus buildings and events accessible to such individuals. Also, lectures need to be presented in sign language for the hearing impaired. Similarly the returning student trend has raised the need for different forms of day care facilities for the young children of student mothers.

c. Older, established services have been effected as well - sometimes disappearing (deans of women offices) - sometimes merging (placement services with counseling services) - sometimes developing of new missions and clientele (a counseling center adds a reading and study skills unit, or in some campus service staff members start outreach efforts to help returning students) - and sometimes reorganized and relocated within the institution as in the case of services for the disadvantaged students created often with federal funding - to provide advisement - financial aid - tutoring and counseling services, etc.

d. Enrollments: Confronted with a generation of lowered birthrates, college admissions offices have become more concerned with recruiting new students rather than their former practices of waiting to see who applies. Different institutions have evolved recruitment targets for different groups, such as athletes, academically gifted, students with other specialized talents, the precocious, minorities, part time students, the adult student group, and so on.

Similarly institutions are looking within at their retention/attrition rates realizing that they might net more students if they were able to retain more of the students whom they have already admitted. (This is particularly important with regard to those student subgroups where attrition is very high.

e. Increasing institutional requirements: this trend appears to be a cyclical one. The activism era led to relaxed advisement requirements, more flexible degree programs, fewer fixed requirments and associated with this, the trend of "grade inflation" (rise in grades given). Recently the pendulum has swung back: more required courses have been introduced, mandatory academic advisement is under consideration, concerns over the quality of students' writing have been eased by introducing a required upper division writing course for undergraduates, and grade inflation seems to have declined.

f. Increasing opportunities for academic credit: Colleges and universities have made large strides here. Examples include credit by examination programs, creative adult education programs, and experiential learning field study experiences for academic credit. Many of these trends find their greatest impact with the adult student - the group whom many universities hope to attract in greater numbers in the future. The added influx of older students also has its influence upon the curriculum. There are more degree programs, courses and workshops pertaining to adults, aging, life transitions including second careers and retirement.

In this brief look at the campus services and student characteristics we should also take into account the fluidity that exists on many campuses. Students may be unaware of this. Faculty and staff may be unaware of this. It is not surprising one would be unaware - especially when most classroom seats remain filled and lines are still long. All that is true, but many of the faces are different - students have come and gone for a host of reasons. Let me illustrate this at one state university with an undergraduate enrollment of

approximately 27,000 undergraduate students. In one year the following changes (apart from graduation) occurred:

Academic actions	Number of undergraduate students
Academic dismissals	3000
Withdrawals (left before term ended)	3000
Dropouts (left after a term ended)	6000
Transfer-ins from other institutions	5000

This amount of change has substantial implications for the institution and its student services in admissions, orientation and reorientation, registrations, transition assistance programs, alumni programs and follow-up programs to retain contact with these students, many of whom may subsequently return to their institution.

Let us turn now to college and university counseling centers, their tasks, their characteristics and their challenges today. Much of my observations are based upon results from the annual College and University Counseling Center Data Bank Survey (Magoon, 1980).

Counseling Centers' Place in Higher Educational Institutions

While there are variations here, the vast majority (over 80%) of American and Canadian counseling centers are responsible to the institution's chief student personnel administrator. The services (including counseling) which are responsible to that administrator do vary from institution to institution. But however the center is located within the institution's table of organizations, the impact that the counseling center has within an institution will be a function of several things:

a. The stability and authority of their administrative superior. When there is much turnover (resignations) here and especially relative to comparable administrators, then that office will likely lose relative

status, authority and power. In a similar vein one can often judge how important an institution views its student services by looking at the institution's table of organization. That is, how high up in the administrative hierarchy is the chief student personnel administrator? The higher the placement, the more status/value the institution accords to its student services..

b. The degree to which there is mutual respect and good working relationships between the counseling service director and the chief student personnel administrator and how well the central administration understands and values the counseling center's contributions.

c. The degree to which the counseling center has - and acts upon -a set of goals which take a broad rather than a narrow view of counseling. A narrow view of counseling is one that equates counseling with one-to-one interviewing often only with students experiencing emotional-social problems, i.e., psychotherapy. A broad view of counseling is one that equates counseling with an applied behavioral scientist role where the campus community is our work place and our mission is to contribute positively to the quality of student life particularly and of campus community life generally. This broad view does not ignore or deprecate traditional individual (or group) counseling functions. The view just emphasizes a broader scope within which the traditional counseling functions are a part.

Let me illustrate actions which follow from a center having such a broad set of goals. Illustrations include developing alternatives to its traditional individual and group services, devising services relevant and appropriate to the entire student body, and considering consultation activities as of equal

importance to counseling/psychotherapy activities. A final illustration involves data gathering and applied research. This means that the center engages in systematic data collection and analysis regarding its services (including judgments by former users) plus data gathering regarding center workings, student characteristics and characteristics of the campus environment.

d. The degree to which the counseling center views its counseling or psychotherapy as based upon an educational model rather than a model of disease. "Such an educational model focuses on eliminating inappropriate and deficient behavior, but also emphasizes capitalizing upon appropriate and skillful behavior and other attributes already in clients' repertoires. This represents an active, collaborative enterprise as educational in its aims and techniques as that fulfilled through more traditional teaching arrangements conducted by academic departments within the institution. This recognizes the counseling center as an integral part of the educational environment of the college community (Leventhal & Magoon, 1979).

Models of Counseling Centers

Just as colleges and universities differ from each other so also do their counseling centers. As an illustration of the variation consider the following figures from our annual Counseling Center Data Bank Survey (Magoon, 1980) figures represent the percent of counseling centers' counseling caseloads which fall into three broad categories of student problems: educational-vocational, emotional-social, and educational skills. The results are presented for large and small institutions based upon enrollment. Large institutions are those with enrollments above 10,000 students.

Center Caseload: Percent Educational Vocational Clientele	Large	Small
High	93	80
75 %ile	48	45
Median	36	30
25 %ile	20	20
Low	0	0
N	86	114

Center Caseload: Percent Emotional-Social Clientele	Large	Small
High	99	99
75 %ile	74	70
Median	52	60
25%ile	40	44
Low	6	5
N	86	116

Center Caseload: Percent Educational Skills Clientele	Large	Small
High	60	60
75 %ile	12	13
Median	7	10
25 %ile	1	5
Low	0	0
N	78	104

The differences between counseling centers is very apparent. For example in 1979-80, the % of educational-vocational cases varies from 20% to 48%. The comparable percentages for emotional-social cases are 40% to 74%. And the comparable percentages for educational skills cases are 1% to 13%. These percentages represent the 25 %ile (Q_1) and 75 %ile (Q_3) points in the caseload distributions of these centers. The differences are, of course, much more dramatic if we were to list the ranges - the highest and lowest caseloads of each problem category.

How are these differences to be evaluated? Several studies have addressed this question. A recent study (Gelso, Birk, Utz & Silver, 1977), described four different models (traditional/general, consultation, vocational guidance and psychotherapy). Six different samples of raters were drawn at the University of Maryland. The subgroups were (a) counseling center professional staff; (b) students; (c) faculty; (d) student personnel administrators; (e) university administrators and (f) resident hall assistants. Ratings were made

anonymously. Results indicated that the traditional/general model was evaluated most positively by five of the subgroups. Other results revealed the following:

a. Among the subgroups of raters, the student personnel subgroup rated consultation activities as more appropriate than did non-student personnel groups;

b. The psychotherapy model consistently received the lowest ratings, although certain personal counseling functions received positive evaluations;

c. Educational-vocational counseling was seen to be highly appropriate by all groups, with counselors and administrators feeling not enough of it was being done.

Trends in College Counseling Services

What kinds of recent trends in services do counseling center directors report in our Data bank? While I have considerably more information here, let me limit this to trends on which more than 45% (the modal response) of the counseling center directors reported notable increases in the last two years (Magoon, 1980). These activities included the following:

More severe presenting complaints by student clients

More services for returning (older) students

More vocational/career counseling

More educational skills development work

More packaged forms of structured groups or treatment modes (such as asser tion training, anxiety management, test taking, etc.

More activities aimed at improving retention of students

Counselor/Student Body Ratios

As a single index of staff the ratio of professional staff in a center to the equivalent full time student enrollment at the institution is a useful measure. Let us consider the range of these ratios for both large and small (under 10,000) institutions.

Counselor/Student Ratios

	Large	Small
High	6600	5500
75 %ile	2400	1625
Median	1855	1000
25 %ile	1333	696
Low	773	115
Total N	87	111

Again the differences among institutions are dramatic. Also note that at each level (high to low) the ratios are consistently more favorable at the smaller schools. (This is one of the most frequently requested items of information that we are asked for in consulting on problems of concern to counselors and others at various institutions.

Challenges for College Counselors

There are a number of challenges, but let me limit our consideration to the following four.

1. Concern for consumers. While it is self evident that as help givers we are concerned about the welfare of help seekers, it is very easy to behave insensitively to either help seekers or prospective help seekers. In agencies with clients waiting for service, a good example is counselors' proneness to adapt and accept this condition rather than constantly attempting to provide more responsive service. Paradoxically, a systems approach to the defining of services offers

more promise for being responsive to help seekers than does our usual practice of believing nothing could be more personal than waiting to see who comes for help and then one by one trying to offer help to them.

2. The problem of becoming habituated: We are all creatures of habit and the longer we work in our counseling services the more habituated we become. This condition is the antithesis of a creative, innovative approach to identifying new and different ways of performing our center's work. The need to maintain our innovative spirit is critical if centers are to evolve, change and adapt to the kind of changing conditions we confront today in higher education. (The trend toward requiring continuing professional education is a modest stimulus in this direction.)

3. The problem of vocational counseling: The problem here is reflected in such findings as Gelso, et al., (1977) reported above, that while counselors and others in higher education do view vocational counseling as very appropriate functions for a counseling center, still many counselors are ambivalent or negative about performing such counseling themselves. There should be a better resolution to this condition than hand wringing in the face of blissful drifting.

4. Implications for counseling of student development concepts: In many college and university settings these concepts (Chickering, 1969; Knefelkamp, 1980; Loevinger, 1976; Parker, 1978; & Perry, 1970) have become increasingly used in program building, descriptive presentations and in some research. The settings have tended to include a variety of student personnel services. However, these concepts have

as yet to become prominent in college counseling centers. It appears that counselors and counseling centers need to address these developments more closely. Only by doing so will we be able to distill from them those insights and findings which may have enduring value for college counseling practices.

Recommendations

Two recent experiences at the University of Maryland suggest some possible activities that may (or may not) be relevant in some of your centers.

1. The senior interview project: This activity was carried out by a variety of professional staff in student affairs (Senior Research Project). About 25 of us interviewed about 200 graduating seniors during their last semester. Our purpose was to learn from the seniors' experiences and impressions before they graduated and left the University. The seniors were most cooperative and interested. At least at Maryland it is apparent that the students are usually not attended to as graduating seniors. We learned both that they appreciated the opportunity and we learned valuable things from the interviews with them. My impression is that many institutions and their counseling centers would profit from engaging in such a project.
2. Learning about students' hierarchy of help givers. This activity has taken the form of several studies, aimed at discovering in what order students with different kinds of problems would seek help from others (Christensen & Magoon, 1974; Christensen, Birk, Brooks & Sedlacek, 1976). There were 12 sources of help givers including family, friends, advisors, ministers, psychiatrists and counselors. The most important finding was that counselors are well down the hierarchy.

Seeing this, some counselors have concluded we should work harder to raise our ranking in the students' hierarchies. Others have concluded that such a conclusion is very unrealistic and that the findings really clarify which groups we should seek to assist in becoming better help givers. Whatever reaction one might take, the investigation of where your services rank in the help seekers' rank order is valuable information to know, and relatively easy to acquire.

I hope you share my enthusiasm for the tasks of counseling in colleges and universities. There are many challenges, many frustrations, ample opportunities to experience "burnout" as well as experiencing success and satisfaction in our work. Hopefully in the months to come we will all experience more success than frustration, more satisfaction than burnout, more creative accomplishment than just maintaining ourselves and our functions. My best wishes to you in your important work.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Professors Kobayashi and Nakamura for the opportunity to address you and to Mrs. Hiraki for serving as interpreter for this paper.

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